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COMMUNICATION

From the time the pioneers entered Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847, until the fall of 1851, the only communication they had with the outside world was through new immigrants or those in the valley returning to their former homes. It took months for news to be brought from or sent to any place in the east. Imagine, if possible, the life the early pioneer lived as far as news from home was concerned. They had left their loved ones in the east or in the lands beyond the sea. Here in Utah they were existing as best they could, wresting from their surroundings their existence, yet always in their hearts was a desire to hear from their people. Visualize what it would mean to have no regular mail service, no telegraph or no telephone. The story of the Utah Pioneers' battle for better communication with the rest of the world is most inspiring and proves their desire to bring to this people the best that civilization had to offer by communication. An incident is told of a family living in England sending a letter to their daughter in Utah informing her that in three months they would leave their native home to join her. After a lapse of nearly seven months, they arrived here, three weeks before the letter. The news that Utah had been made a territory did not arrive in Utah for many months after the act was passed by Congress.

In 1851 the first contract to carry the United States mail and express between Salt Lake City and St. Joseph, Missouri, was given to John M. Hockaday and William Liggett. They used the stage coach and made the trip once a month. Later, they ran semi-monthly. About the same time, W. F. McGraw of Maryland established a stage line between Salt Lake City and Sacramento, California.

Later, on March 3, 1852, a memorial was approved and sent to Washington by the legislature of Utah, asking for a weekly mail route between Washington and Salt Lake City:

"Your memorialists, the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, respectfully pray the establishment of a weekly mail route from the Missouri River to this place; as by the present arrangement of monthly mails, we often fail getting them once in even two months, during the winter season, which you will perceive, subjects us to serious inconveniences, and many disadvantages, when compared with the more favored population of the States, where they enjoy all the facilities of communication, afforded by the power of steam and the lightning rapidity of the telegraph. —